Pycnanthemum muticum

Herbaceous perennial native to the Eastern US Common names are blunt mountainmint, short-toothed mountainmint, and clustered mountainmint. Despite its name, this plant typically grows in meadows, fields, and low woodland areas.

It attains a height of 1-3 feet with a spread of 1-3 feet. It spreads by rhizomes, so if you don’t want it spreading, just take a spade and cut off the offending plants, and pull them up. I haven’t found it to be aggressive.

It blooms from July to September in full sun to part shade. The tiny pink flowers surround a silvery bract; the leaves near the flowers are silvery too. It requires little maintenance, and is drought tolerant. Mine got no supplemental water, and were very happy. I cut and entered three small specimens in the herb class this past weekend.

Flowers are attractive to pollinators such as butterflies and bees, especially Scoliid wasps. The wasps never bother me, even as I weed around the clump. Scoliid wasps are particularly beneficial, as they help control Japanese beetles, by laying eggs on the larvae.

If you’re afraid of bees and wasps, or allergic, this is not the plant for you.

This plant is very vertical, so would look best with a shorter, rounded native plant in front of it, like one of the shorter Goldenrods, such as Solidago sphacelata ‘Golden Fleece’.

September 13, 2022 Sunny McGeorge